



WISCONSIN STATE REPRESENTATIVE

Jennifer Shilling

95TH ASSEMBLY DISTRICT

Testimony in support of AB 103 – Charity Dental Care
Assembly Committee on Health & Health Care Reform
March 4, 2009

Good morning Chairman Richards and members of the Assembly Health and Health Care Reform Committee. Thank you for holding a public hearing on this bill.

As many of you may know, I have been involved with the La Crosse Area Dental Advocacy Coalition for almost three years. During that time our coalition has actively pursued a variety of initiatives to address the lack of access to dental care for residents of Western Wisconsin.

The lack of access to dental care is a serious problem for many children and families throughout Wisconsin. Studies have shown that tooth decay affects nearly a fifth of 2 to 4-year-olds, more than half of 8-year-olds, and more than three-fourths of 17-year-olds. About half of all cavities among low-income children go untreated.

One successful program that has been created to provide dental care to people who otherwise would not have access is the Mission of Mercy (MOM) program. This program was started in Virginia in 2000 to provide free dental care to area residents. Since 2000, Virginia has hosted over 30 MOM events, and has inspired many other states to start their own MOM programs.

I'm very pleased that the Wisconsin Dental Association has chosen La Crosse for the first Wisconsin-based MOM event. The 2-day event will take place in La Crosse on June 26 and 27, and it is anticipated that approximately 1,200 patients will receive dental treatment at the event. Additional MOM events are expected to be held in other communities throughout the state in coming years.

The MOM event relies on the volunteer services of dental care providers from Wisconsin and often attracts willing providers from neighboring states. However, under current Wisconsin statutes, out-of-state dental providers would be required to pay the full licensing fee and go through an extensive licensure process if they wished to volunteer for the MOM event in June.

AB 103 would create a "no-fee" temporary permit for dental providers who want to volunteer at dental charity care events, and who meet all state dental licensing requirements, other than the state jurisprudence exam.

Given the serious health problems associated with the lack of dental care access in Wisconsin, we should be encouraging qualified and willing providers to volunteer their time to help the underserved dental care population, regardless of which state the providers are from.

Thank you for your time, and I appreciate your support of AB 103.



from Rep. Shilling

Mission of Mercy

Mission of Mercy (MOM) programs were started in 2000 by the Virginia Dental Association to provide free dental care to local residents who otherwise were unable to receive dental care. Since then, they have hosted more than 30 MOM projects and have inspired numerous other states to do the same. The WDA together with the WDA Foundation is ready to move forward and host their first program in 2009.

Why MOM? A MOM program serves two purposes. First, to address the patients' most pressing dental problems and relieve them of their pain. Second, to bring awareness to the increasing problem of access to health care for the low-income population and to bring pressure on the government to fund the promises it has made regarding the provision of dental care to the Medicaid population in Wisconsin.

Who is eligible to receive care? The MOM program will provide care to anyone that shows up that does not have any medical compromising condition that would prohibit them from receiving care. Children and adults alike are welcome. Un-insured, under-insured or those who otherwise have difficulty getting to a dentist are all welcome on a first-come, first-served basis. No appointments will be accepted. Approximately 900 – 1,000 patients will be seen during two days of treatment.

What services will be offered? M.A.S.H. style dentistry will be performed. Fillings, extractions, cleanings and limited treatment partials are offered. All work done is free of charge to the patients.

When will the first MOM program be held in Wisconsin? Our first program will be held June 25 – 28, 2009. Thursday, June 25 will be set-up, treatment will occur on Friday & Saturday June 26 & 27 and tear-down will be completed on Sunday, June 28. Volunteers will be needed on all four days.

Where will the first MOM program be held and why was it selected? La Crosse will host the first Wisconsin program. Numerous locations were evaluated and La Crosse was ultimately selected because of the combination of positive factors it offers. First, there is a need but we felt the need wouldn't be so overwhelming in the first year that we would have to turn away more people than we served. Second, there was adequate space for the event and for overnight accommodations for volunteers coming in from around the state. Third, and probably the most important, La Crosse has an oral health coalition dedicated to increasing dental access to the area. A MOM event requires a lot of support from the community and the coalition is ready to help us make this a success. Also of primary importance, the

local La Crosse County dental society has pledged their support to the program.

How can I help? There are a variety of ways that dental professionals and non-dental professionals alike can help.

Volunteers over the age of 16 will be needed in the following areas:

- Equipment Set-Up & Tear-Down
- Patient Escorts
- Patient Registration
- Medical Triage
- Dental Triage
- Pre-Medicating
- Numbing
- Restorative Dentistry
- Oral Surgery
- Hygiene
- Sterilization
- Equipment maintenance
- Translators
- Exit interviewers
- Pharmacist/pharmacist clerk
- Traffic/Parking directors
- EMTs
- Food service
- Volunteer Registration

Tax-deductible donations and contributions are also being sought. Cash and in-kind donations are being accepted through the WDA Foundation. Other MOM events have been able to provide a 6 – 8 times return on investment and we look to do the same. Please contact Lani Becker at the WDA (lbecker@wda.org or 866-431-9625) to find out what types of in-kind contributions are needed. We will need non-dental supplies, including food, bottled water, T-shirts, paper products and more.

Last updated Nov. 5, 2008 2:37 p.m.



WDA Testimony in Support of AB 103 (LRB 1475/3) Temporary Permits to Practice Dentistry and Dental Hygiene

**Dr. Gene Shoemaker, WDA Vice President
Assembly Health Committee Public Hearing
Wednesday, March 4, 2009 - 11:00 AM**

Good morning, Chair Richards and members of the Assembly Health Committee. My name is Dr. Gene Shoemaker. I am a general dentist who graduated with my doctorate in dentistry from Marquette University School of Dentistry in 1989 and, after successfully completing the written and clinical board exams I obtained a license to practice in Wisconsin. After practicing as an associate in both Oshkosh and Appleton, I purchased a practice in Waukesha in 1993. My business partner, Dr. Kate Gilson is also a Marquette dental school graduate and together we employ 11 people in our small business in downtown Waukesha.

I tell you this, because it emphasizes the unique nature of dentistry – that while a part of the regulated, health care-provider community, most dentists still own their practices and operate as small businesses; we do not shift costs of the underfunded Medicaid program and we do not operate under the type of nonprofit tax status so many larger hospital-based health care entities do. The small-business model is why so many Medicaid recipients often face problems accessing dental care: dentists have very limited ability to shift costs and, as a result, many of us limit our participation in Medicaid and/or we choose to actively provide charity care in other venues.

I personally provide charity dental care in my practice by treating patients referred through the WDA Foundation's Donated Dental Services program and St. Joseph Medical and Dental Clinic in Waukesha. In addition, I will be treating patients at the new low-income dental clinic established in Waukesha this past year.

I come before you today as vice president of the nearly 3,000-member Wisconsin Dental Association and as chair of the upcoming large-scale voluntary, charity-care program of the WDA and WDA Foundation called Mission of Mercy. Wisconsin's first Mission of Mercy (often referred to as "MOM" program) will take place in La Crosse the weekend of June 27-28, 2009. The MOM program is a free dental care event, which will help provide some short-term relief to a limited number of children and adults. We also hope it enables us to keep the discussion focused on more meaningful long-term solutions to Medicaid funding issues.

Goals of the first WDA MOM event include: (1) providing free access to dental care while placing a high priority on patients suffering from dental infections or pain, (2) raising public awareness of the increasing difficulty low-income adults and children face in accessing critical dental care and (3) challenging Medicaid patients, policy-makers and dental professionals to work together to reduce the disease burden and improve access to oral health of those who have been promised care by the state.

We anticipate nearly 1,000 volunteers (dentists, hygienists, assistants, lab techs, nurses, lay people, etc.) will provide care to approximately 1,200 patients during the 2-day event. Patients will be seen on a first-come, first-served basis beginning with a stop in dental triage area to make sure the most urgent needs are addressed as quickly as possible. While waiting for dental services, patients will watch oral health patient education videos and receive information on how they can help prevent future disease and infections by eating right and implementing good daily oral hygiene practices.

We expect the value of care volunteers will give away during this 2-day event to equal almost \$600,000. This is an extensive project to undertake from an administrative standpoint and it will require significant funding to bring to fruition. Actual hard costs of operating this program will be approximately \$135,000, but this figure does not include the in-kind administrative contributions from WDA staff, leaders and our WDA Foundation to scout facilities, recruit and coordinate food donations, coordinate equipment and supply rentals, draft patient care forms and obtain financial donations from individual dentists, dental-related companies and outside entities. Our goal is to raise the \$135,000 hard dollars that will be necessary to rent facilities, equipment, supplies and purchase food and other necessary items.

The Mission of Mercy event will rely completely on the volunteer services of dental care providers. In addition to my Wisconsin colleagues, the WDA has already been contacted by 10 to 15 providers from other states who routinely travel around the country to participate in MOM events; these dentists have indicated a willingness to come here to provide free care as part of our program.

Under current Wisconsin statutes, out-of-state dental providers are required to pay the full licensing fee and go through an extensive licensure process if they wish to volunteer for the WDA's Mission of Mercy event in June. In 2008, I had the opportunity to be of professional service at three MOM events in other states after being granted a temporary dental permit to practice dentistry in those states.

To tap into the professional generosity of out-of-state dental providers who have expressed interest in volunteering at our Mission of Mercy event, Rep. Shilling and Sen. Vinehout have drafted AB 103. This bill that creates a "no-fee" temporary permit for dental providers wanting to volunteer at dental charity care events, providing they meet all state dental licensing requirements other than the state jurisprudence exam. **I'm here today, on behalf of the WDA, to testify in strong support of AB 103.**

Anticipating our first MOM program to be a success, the WDA Board of Trustees and our WDA Foundation have decided to tentatively hold another MOM event in 2010 in another Wisconsin community. Future Mission of Mercy event locations will be determined after we can evaluate the success of our event in La Crosse.

The WDA thanks Representative Shilling and Senator Kapanke for their local leadership on our upcoming WDA Mission of Mercy event in La Crosse. Our thanks, too, to Senator Vinehout and all the state legislators who have signed on early as co-sponsors of this legislation. We continue to encourage bi-partisan support for AB 103 as it moves through the legislative process and we ask for your support of this bill. Thank you for your time and attention. I would be happy to take any questions you might have.